

"Had I come up to dig for the hidden treasure of Tuk-i-Karu ? " the guide asked. " Was I seeking gold ? Or was I searching for medicine plants to sell in Feringhistan ?"

The three days here have been rather lively. The information concerning routes has been singularly contradictory. There is a path which descends over 4000 feet to the Holiwar valley, through which, for certain reasons, it is desirable to pass. Some say it is absolutely impassable for laden mules, others that it can be traversed with precautions, others again that they would not take even their asses down; that there are shelving rocks, and that if a mule slipped it would go down to -----.

Hadji with much force urges that we should descend to the plain, and go by a comparatively safe route to Khuramabad, leave the heavy baggage there, and get a strong escort of sowars from the Governor for the country of the Pulawands. There is much that is plausible in this plan, the Sahib approves of it, and the Agha, with whom the decision rests, has taken it into very careful consideration, but I am thoroughly averse to it, though I say nothing.

Hadji says he cannot risk his mules on the path down to the Holiwar valley. I could have filled pages with the difficulties which have been grappled with during the last few weeks of the journey as to guides, routes, perils, etc., two or three hours of every day being occupied in the attempt to elicit truth from men who, from either inherent vagueness and inaccuracy or

from a deliberate intention to deceive, contradict both themselves and each other, but on this occasion the difficulties have been greater than ever; the order of march has been changed five times, and we have been obliged to remain here because the Agha has not considered that the information he has obtained has warranted him in coming to a decision.